

the signatories to INTELSAT, I chose to become an original co-sponsor of the Open-market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications Act "ORBIT" because I believed it was important to get behind a bill that can be enacted in to law this Congress to address these challenges.

One provision that was of particular concern to me is that of "fresh look." The conference agreement on S. 376 does eliminate the "fresh look" provision that continued to be debated this year. "Fresh look" is a policy that, if implemented, would allow the federal government to permit COMSAT's corporate customers to abrogate their current contracts with COMSAT. The conference agreement rejects "fresh look" and preserves the ability of the private parties involved to negotiate contracts so that one party cannot simply walk away from its business obligations without any attendant liability.

This conference agreement does not allow the FCC to take any action that would impair lawful, private contracts or agreements. Both chambers in the 106th Congress emphatically rejected "fresh look" when they passed their own versions of international satellite privatization legislation, and the conference agreement reflects this consensus.

I commend the conferees for including language in the conference agreement that protects private agreements, contracts, and the like. To read the relevant section otherwise would be to dismiss the clear intent of Congress to preserve existing and binding obligations of parties.

CHILD SAFETY LOCKS

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise to applaud this morning's bipartisan "firearm summit" at the White House. A commitment to find an agreeable compromise on the Juvenile Justice Bill could not be more timely.

A week ago today, Mr. President, a six-year old living in a drug-infested flophouse in Mount Morris Township, Michigan found a gun under a quilt. The six-year old who found that gun wanted to settle a playground quarrel he had the previous day with his classmate, Kayla Rolland.

He was able to grab the gun from under the quilt because blankets are not trigger locks; they are not a sufficient deterrent to curious children who find guns lying around unlocked. He took the gun and hid it in his pants and brought it to school the next day. No one and nothing prevented him from doing so.

When he arrived at Buell Elementary School, the boy announced to Kayla that she was not his friend. He waited for an opportunity to get back at her. He later said he wanted to scare her.

As his classmates were filing out and heading toward the school library, he

had his chance. He did not call her names; he did not pull her hair; he did not hit her. Instead, he pulled the gun from his pants and waved it at two other classmates. He then accurately set his sights on Kayla, pulled the trigger, and killed her. She was all of six years old. He shot her dead in their first grade classroom.

He had access to the gun because it was not safely stored, and he was able to fire it because the gun did not have a safety lock. Either would have saved Kayla's life.

I have heard skeptics say that our child safety lock proposal, which 78 Senators supported last year, would not have mattered in this case because this gun was stolen. That is only half-true. Had the legal owner of this gun safely locked it with one of the devices mandated under our bill, then the thief might not have stolen it. Had the legal owner of this gun safely locked it with one of the devices mandated under our bill, the child's uncle might not have been able to leave it loaded within the boy's reach. Had the legal owner of this gun safely locked it with one of the devices mandated under our bill, the first grader could not have picked it up and used it with deadly accuracy.

How do we respond to this tragedy? How do we respond to others like it? There is no simple answer. But without a doubt, enacting our modest legislation to mandate that a child safety lock be sold with every handgun would be a good first step.

The distinguished Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, HENRY HYDE, said over the weekend about the stalled gun provisions of the Juvenile Justice bill, "If you can't get dinner, at least get a sandwich." I agree.

Chairman HYDE, who has always been committed to reasonable firearms control, would prefer dinner. And I would too: we ought to pass the whole Juvenile Justice bill. We ought to do it soon. Time is of the essence because while the Congressional attention span is short, children die even when Congress isn't watching. We need to do more to protect children from guns and we need to do it now.

It is a regrettable truth that progress in the Juvenile Justice debate lurches forward only in reaction to unspeakable tragedy. A year ago next month, the massacre at Columbine and the shooting in Conyers, Georgia shocked this Senate into passing common sense proposals to get tough on thugs and violent juveniles. Some of those very same measures, including child safety locks, failed to pass the Senate by wide margins just the previous year.

But the overwhelming approval of the child safety lock proposal demonstrates that the Senate "gets it:" kids and guns do not mix. The House needs to "get it" too. The Center for Disease Control estimates that nearly 1.2 million "latch-key" children have

access to loaded and unlocked firearms. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that children and teenagers cause over 10,000 unintentional shootings each year in which at least 800 people die. In addition, over 1,900 children and teenagers attempt suicide with a firearm each year. Tragically, over three-fourths of them are successful.

If preventable suicides and accidents are not enough to convince you that guns must be kept out of the hands of children, consider the following: within the next five years, firearms will overtake motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death among American children. The rate of firearm death of children under 15 years old is 16 times higher in the U.S. than in the 25 other industrialized nations combined. And the firearm injury "epidemic," due largely to handgun injuries, is ten times larger than the polio epidemic of the first half of the 20th century.

The very same day that young Kayla Rolland was tragically killed in Michigan, a 12 year old middle school student in the Milwaukee area carried a loaded gun to school. A disagreement the previous day led him to seek revenge by scaring his classmates. Thankfully, he never used the gun and school officials safely confiscated it. This scenario is replicated across the country every day.

Requiring child safety locks will drive the number of juvenile gun deaths down—something everyone approves of.

Mr. President, we have the opportunity to reduce what will soon be the number one cause of death among American children. How can we sit idly by when preventing it is so attainable? We cannot.

So we ought to pass the Kohl-Chafee-Hatch Child Safety Lock Act. Alone or, better yet, as part of a package, it will help prevent the tragic accidents associated with unauthorized, unlocked, unattended firearms. I am pleased that the President called today's summit to try to move on these urgent matters. I am distressed that it seems, at least today, unproductive. And I pledge to work with the President and the bipartisan Leadership to act now so that we do not have to mourn more preventable innocent deaths.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RESTORATION OF LITHUANIA'S INDEPENDENCE

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, on March 18 of this year, at the Lithuanian Cultural Center, in Southfield, Michigan, Lithuanian Americans will gather to mark the tenth anniversary of the reestablishment of Lithuanian independence.

Michigan's Lithuanian-American community also will celebrate the perseverance and sacrifice of their people, which enabled them to achieve the freedom they now enjoy.

I have reviewed the bare facts before: On March 11, 1990, the newly elected Lithuanian Parliament, fulfilling its electoral mandate from the people of Lithuania, declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence and the establishment of a democratic state. This marked a great moment for Lithuania and for lovers of freedom around the globe.

The people of Lithuania endured 51 years of oppressive foreign occupation. Operating under cover of the infamous Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939, Soviet troops marched into Lithuania, beginning an occupation characterized by communist dictatorship and cultural genocide.

Even in the face of this oppression, the Lithuanian people were not defeated. They resisted their oppressors and kept their culture, their faith and their dream of independence very much alive even during the hardest times.

The people of Lithuania were even able to mobilize and sustain a non-violent movement for social and political change, a movement which came to be known as *Sajudis*. This people's movement helped guarantee a peaceful transition to independence through full participation in democratic elections on February 24, 1990.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case, peace and freedom had to be purchased again and again. In January of 1991, ten months after restoration of independence, the people and government of Lithuania faced a bloody assault by foreign troops intent on overthrowing their democratic institutions. Lithuanians withstood this assault, maintaining their independence and their democracy. Their successful use of non-violent resistance to an oppressive regime is an inspiration to all.

Lithuania's integration into the international community has been swift and sure. On September 17, 1991, the reborn nation became a member of the United Nations and is a signatory to a number of its organizations and other international agreements. It also is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the Council of Europe.

Lithuania is an associate member of the European Union, has applied for NATO membership and is currently negotiating for membership in the WTO, OECD and other Western organizations.

The United States established diplomatic relations with Lithuania on July 28, 1992. But our nation never really broke with the government and people of Lithuania. The United States never recognized the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the U.S.S.R., and views

the present Government of Lithuania as a legal continuation of the inter-war republic. Indeed, for over fifty years the United States maintained a bipartisan consensus that our nation would refuse to recognize the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the former Soviet Union.

America's relations with Lithuania continue to be strong, friendly and mutually beneficial. Lithuania has enjoyed most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment with the United States since December, 1991. Through 1996, the United States has committed over \$100 million to Lithuania's economic and political transformation and to address humanitarian needs. In 1994, the United States and Lithuania signed an agreement of bilateral trade and intellectual property protection, and in 1997 a bilateral investment treaty.

In 1998 the United States and Lithuania signed the Baltic Charter Partnership. That charter recalls the history of American relations with the area and underscores our "real, profound, and enduring" interest in the security and independence of the three Baltic states. As the Charter also notes, our interest in a Europe whole and free will not be ensured until Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are secure.

I commend the people of Lithuania for their courage and perseverance in using peaceful means to regain their independence. I pledge to work with my colleagues to continue working to secure the freedom and independence of Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors, and I join with the people of Lithuania as they celebrate their independence.●

NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

● Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I'm pleased to rise today to call to the attention of my colleagues and all of our constituents across the nation that March is National Eye Donor Month. For more than 55 years now thousands of Americans have participated in this selfless exercise of helping others.

The purpose of National Eye Donor Month is not only to honor the past donors who have played a pivotal role in restoring the sight of over half a million individuals, but also to raise public awareness of the continuing need for donors. When people decide to become a donor all they need to do is sign a card and announce their intent to their family.

The many recipients of this "gift of sight" represent the great diversity of our nation's population. For instance, Judrita Billiot is a young Houma Indian who lives in a small community about 50 miles from New Orleans, Louisiana. This young girl was born with a condition known as congenital opacity, in which the corneas neither transmit nor allow the passage of light. When she was still less than a year old Judrita received corneal transplants in

both of her eyes. I'm happy to say that today she is a healthy young girl with normal vision thanks not only to the transplant procedure, but also to the donors who were thoughtful enough to leave behind this extraordinary gift.

The success of Judrita's transplants is not uncommon. The current success rate of corneal transplantation is nearly 90% thanks to a rigorous screening process and the dedication of our nation's eye banks, working in conjunction with the Eye Bank Association of America.

I appreciate this opportunity to highlight National Eye Donor Month and I encourage all of my colleagues to work with their local eye banks to increase public awareness of corneal transplantation and the continuous need for donors.●

RECOGNIZING KUAKINI HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the Kuakini Medical Health System as it celebrates its 100th anniversary caring for Hawaii's people. Kuakini began as an ethnic charity hospital founded by Japanese immigrants who arrived in Hawaii to labor in the thriving sugar cane fields. Plantation wages were low and many newcomers found themselves unable to afford medical care. The Japanese Benevolent Society provided emergency relief to the immigrants, but a fire destroyed their facilities in January, 1900. Undaunted, the Japanese Benevolent Society started plans to build a charity hospital. Funds were raised through membership dues and community donations. Half an acre of land was purchased in Kapalama and a two-story wooden building housing 38 patient beds was completed by July, 1900. This humble beginning was the start of Kuakini Health System.

As the last existing hospital in the United States established by Japanese immigrants, Kuakini is unique among health institutions in the United States and Hawaii. There have been many changes during the past century, but the commitment of the health professionals and volunteers of Kuakini Health System to meet the health care needs of Hawaii's community has not wavered. Kuakini Health System has expanded to embrace and serve Hawaii's community without regard to ethnicity, disability, age, sex, religious affiliation, or financial status. Kuakini Health System is in the company of only 5 percent of all U.S. hospitals having a heavy Medicare caseload. Sixty-five percent of the hospital's admissions are Medicare patients and Kuakini's hospital cares for the largest composition of elderly patients among Hawaii's hospitals.

Kuakini Health System is a teaching facility, training health professionals